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Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus

I. Introduction

1. The present report on the United Nations operation in Cyprus covers developments from 21 November 2009 to 20 May 2010. It brings up to date, since the issuance of my last report (S/2009/609) on 25 November 2009, the record of activities carried out by the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) pursuant to Security Council resolution 186 (1964) and subsequent Council resolutions, most recently resolution 1898 (2009). The activities of my mission of good offices in Cyprus are covered separately in my report dated 11 May 2010 (S/2010/238).

2. As at 30 April, the strength of the military component stood at 859, including all ranks, and the strength of the police component stood at 69 (see annex).

II. Activities of the Force

A. Prevention of a recurrence of fighting and the maintenance of the military status quo

3. The main efforts of UNFICYP during the reporting period have focused on maintaining the stability of the buffer zone and contributing to the overall United Nations effort in support of the peace process. The opposing forces have cooperated very well with UNFICYP military forces and the situation in the buffer zone has remained stable. Regular meetings between the UNFICYP Force Commander and Commanders of the opposing forces continued to be positive and beneficial for maintaining the stable environment on the island.

4. The overall number of military violations committed by the opposing forces has increased compared to the previous reporting period. The general significance of the violations decreased, however, in terms of their effect on the maintenance of the military status quo in the buffer zone. The number of violations committed by the Turkish Forces during the reporting period has decreased, particularly with regard to construction and overmanning incidents. The number of violations committed by the National Guard has increased. The vast majority of the violations were simply

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changes of posture, however, involving the fixing of bayonets and wearing of helmets on positions along the ceasefire line.

5. The opposing forces continue to sporadically employ low-level tactical measures which provoke reactions from the other side, mostly in the centre of Nicosia. UNFICYP continues to believe that the military confidence-building measures it has proposed, such as the unmanning and/or closing of observation posts in areas where the opposing troops are particularly close to each other, would help to improve the situation. To date, the National Guard has worked with UNFICYP on assessing this proposal. As mentioned in my previous report, UNFICYP is still waiting for concrete steps to be taken by the Turkish Forces/Turkish Cypriot Security Forces in this regard. UNFICYP remains committed to reducing tension and military presence in the area of the buffer zone through the implementation of confidence-building measures, with support from both sides.

6. During the reporting period, civilians have increasingly challenged the authority of UNFICYP within the buffer zone. On several occasions, members of the Greek Cypriot civilian population have engaged in threatening behaviour and minor physical assault on UNFICYP personnel (see para. 23).

7. No major exercises of the opposing forces have been reported during the period under review. Low-level exercises associated with the rotation of troops continue. As part of annual routines within the buffer zone, these usually involve the demonstration of skills and equipment for senior officer inspections, particularly along the Turkish Forces ceasefire line, and terrain briefings along the National Guard ceasefire line.

8. Positions established by the opposing forces in the Dherinia area that violate the status quo in the area, referred to in my previous reports (S/2009/248) and (S/2009/609), remain unchanged. The Turkish Forces retain the checkpoint in the Laroujina pocket. The Turkish Forces have completed regular inspections of the liaison post at Strovilia and repeatedly overmanned the position in violation of the military status quo in the area. The situation in Varosha remains unchanged. The United Nations holds the Government of Turkey responsible for the status quo in Varosha.

B. Demining activity in the buffer zone

9. Demining operations continue to make good progress: 59 of 72 minefields have been cleared, more than 20,000 mines destroyed and more than 9 square kilometres of land cleared of mines. The introduction of mechanical clearance equipment in April, to process low-threat areas once manual mine clearance has been completed, has greatly improved overall clearance rates. Early in May, the Turkish Forces committed themselves in writing to releasing 9 of the 10 remaining minefields attributable to them. In addition, the Turkish Forces undertook to release four more minefields located outside the buffer zone.

C. Restoration of normal conditions and humanitarian functions

10. Cypriots from both sides continued to seek assistance from UNFICYP in addressing day-to-day issues arising from the division of the island that affect their

lives, including in relation to economic, social and educational matters, the transfer of the deceased, and commemorative, religious and socio-cultural gatherings. The mission continued to facilitate the normalization of conditions for civilians in the buffer zone and provide humanitarian assistance to the communities, as required.

11. During the reporting period, UNFICYP recorded more than 750,000 crossings through the buffer zone, of which approximately 200,000 occurred at the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing point. Goods worth approximately €492,780 crossed from the south to the north, and goods worth approximately €2,128,245 crossed in the opposite direction.

12. UNFICYP facilitated the implementation of a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-supported joint project prepared by the two Nicosia municipalities under the Nicosia Master Plan for the stabilization of buildings at the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing in the buffer zone. The current phase of this project, the launch of which I witnessed during my visit to Cyprus from 31 January to 2 February (see S/2010/238, paras. 10 and 21), is expected to be finalized by the end of May 2010. The mission is also working with the two municipalities to stabilize buildings in the buffer zone in central Nicosia that have degenerated over time and pose a safety hazard.

13. With regard to the planned opening of a crossing at Limnitis/Yeşilırmak through the buffer zone, a Greek Cypriot-Turkish Cypriot joint venture company was awarded a contract by UNDP following the completion of technical surveys on the ground. After some delay, work on the crossing is now under way.

14. During the reporting period, UNFICYP, in cooperation with international and local partners, facilitated 118 bicommunal events with the participation of 5,648 people from both communities, who came together to promote the reunification of the island and support the ongoing negotiations between the leaders of the two communities. The events were held at the Ledra Palace Hotel and nearby locations in the buffer zone, which continues to be considered a neutral venue by both sides. A wide variety of bicommunal activities and joint projects are conducted by UNDP, with funding from the European Commission and the United States Agency for International Development.

15. Regular meetings between Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders and representatives continued to be held at the Ledra Palace Hotel under the auspices of the Embassy of Slovakia. On 27 January, members of the Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage attended the meeting as guests of honour. In the joint communiqué issued on that occasion, the leaders and representatives of political parties committed themselves to supporting the work of the Committee.

16. UNFICYP continued to deliver humanitarian assistance to Greek Cypriots and Maronites living in the northern part of the island. During the reporting period, UNFICYP conducted 59 humanitarian convoys and visits to 361 Greek Cypriots, most of whom are elderly and in need of medical attention, and 128 Maronites in the north. There have been no new developments regarding the requests of Greek Cypriots and Maronites who seek to return to, and permanently reside in, the north (see S/2009/609, para. 17).

17. UNFICYP also continued to assist Turkish Cypriots living in the south with access to welfare services, housing and education. In Limassol and Paphos, UNFICYP continued to work with the local authorities and community

representatives to strengthen its support in educational and social areas. There have been no new developments regarding the establishment of a Turkish language primary school in Limassol.

18. Members of both communities continue to seek the assistance of UNFICYP to use the buffer zone for various civilian activities, including farming, maintenance of public and private infrastructure, construction and commercial ventures. Facilitation of such activities, while ensuring stability and maintaining the military status quo in the buffer zone, remains one of the main challenges facing the mission. Lack of adherence to UNFICYP procedures regarding civilian activities in the buffer zone and differences in the demarcation of the buffer zone continued to pose problems in the implementation of the mandate of the mission. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated infrastructure repair and other humanitarian projects in the buffer zone with both sides. It also authorized 12 projects out of 16 applications. The projects inside the buffer zone included construction, both residential and agricultural, and water management and extraction activities.

19. UNFICYP continued to assist in maintaining good relations and building confidence between the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities in the mixed village of Pyla in the buffer zone. To that end, UNFICYP continued to play a mediation role and monitor long-standing arrangements established between the two communities. The mission worked closely with the local leaders of the two communities in carrying out these functions. Management of day-to-day affairs was maintained through regular, direct communication and mediation by UNFICYP at the local level.

20. The Technical Committee on Cultural Heritage, supported by UNFICYP and its advisory board continued to discuss and plan for the preservation, protection and restoration of immovable cultural heritage throughout the island. The members of the Committee participated in a clean-up operation for a mosque and a church, as a symbolic gesture of goodwill and cooperation together with Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot political party leaders and representatives and the Embassy of Slovakia. UNFICYP continued to facilitate access to sites and icons of religious and cultural significance to either community. During the reporting period, UNFICYP facilitated eight religious and commemorative events on the island, of which six involved crossing the buffer zone to the north, and two were held in the buffer zone. A total of 1,010 individuals participated in those events.

21. UNFICYP continued to liaise with the two sides on law enforcement and issues related to crossings on humanitarian grounds. The procedure put in place by the Technical Committee on Health, to facilitate medical evacuations across the buffer zone on humanitarian grounds, provided an example of the good cooperation at the technical level by both communities in dealing with the majority of such evacuations. UNFICYP facilitated two medical evacuations and the transfer of the remains of a Greek Cypriot. It also conducted 15 visits to 11 Turkish Cypriot inmates in the south.

22. Relations between UNFICYP and the police forces on both sides remained cooperative and constructive, with daily communications between UNFICYP police liaison officers and liaison officers from the respective police forces. In addition, the UNFICYP Senior Police Adviser held regular meetings with the chiefs of police from both sides to enhance cooperation and address operational matters within the buffer zone.

23. During the reporting period, one theft, four cases of illegal immigration, two cases each of criminal damage, smuggling and suspected animal poisoning in the buffer zone were reported to UNFICYP. The United Nations police facilitated the investigation of those incidents. In addition, there have been two incidents of threat and assault on UNFICYP military personnel which are being investigated by Cyprus police with assistance from United Nations police.

24. The Technical Committee on Crime and Criminal Matters, which is supported by UNFICYP, further intensified its work. The establishment of a joint communications room in the buffer zone helped to facilitate a number of activities, including a bicommunal seminar on children at risk, release of road safety leaflets and the handover of a prisoner from the north to the south. Further to the agreement between the parties in July 2009 to move the joint communications room to a more permanent location, UNDP has funded the renovation, with UNFICYP assistance, of an unused residential property to the west of Nicosia.

25. Despite positive changes regarding the restriction of movement of UNFICYP personnel, noted in my previous report (see S/2009/609, para. 4), the movement of United Nations staff members of Greek Cypriot origin in the north remained restricted unless they were accompanied by an international United Nations staff member. Such restrictions, against which UNFICYP has protested, have a negative impact on the operational effectiveness of the mission.

III. Other developments

26. As part of the Secretariat's response to Security Council resolutions 1873 (2009) and 1898 (2009), in which the Council noted the importance of contingency planning in relation to the settlement, including recommendations as appropriate for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations, a preliminary assessment mission visited the island from 10 to 15 May. The mission included staff from the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs. The team held discussions with UNFICYP, other United Nations actors, such as the good offices mission and UNDP, and the parties.

27. Since my last report, the parties have not yet considered in depth the role which the United Nations might be expected to play in support of the settlement. It remains, therefore, too early to be able to identify with confidence the parameters of a possible United Nations involvement in this regard. For the time being, planning will continue to proceed in a flexible manner and be guided by the evolution in the talks and the views of the parties.

IV. Committee on Missing Persons in Cyprus

28. During the reporting period, the Committee on Missing Persons pursued its bicommunal project on the exhumation, identification and return of remains of missing persons. Since the start of the project, the remains of more than 650 individuals have been exhumed on both sides of the buffer zone by the Committee's bicommunal teams of archaeologists. The remains of over 370 missing persons have undergone examination at the Committee's bicommunal anthropological laboratory in the United Nations Protected Area in Nicosia. Following DNA genetic analysis,

carried out by a bicommunal team of scientists at the Cyprus Institute of Neurology and Genetics, the remains of 39 individuals were returned to their respective families over the reporting period, bringing the total number to 227 as at 8 May. During the reporting period, the Committee has been granted access to four new exhumation sites located in military areas in the north.

V. Financial and administrative aspects

29. As indicated in my last report, the General Assembly, by its resolution 63/290 of 30 June 2009, appropriated the amount of $54.4 million for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010, inclusive of the voluntary contribution of one third of the net cost of the Force, equivalent to $17.3 million, from the Government of Cyprus and the voluntary contribution of $6.5 million from the Government of Greece. I invite other countries and organizations to consider providing voluntary contributions, with a view to reducing the portion of the cost of UNFICYP covered by assessed contributions.

30. My proposed budget for the maintenance of UNFICYP for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011, which amounts to $56.9 million, is currently under consideration by the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session.

31. Should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNFICYP for a further period of six months, the cost of maintaining the Force would be limited to the amount to be approved by the General Assembly.

32. As at 30 April 2010, the total outstanding assessed contributions to the special account for UNFICYP for the period from 16 June 1993 to 30 April 2010 amounted to $13.4 million. The total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations as at the same date amounted to $1,240 million.

33. Reimbursement of troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the periods to 28 February 2010 and 31 December 2009, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VI. Observations

34. During the reporting period, the situation in the buffer zone has remained calm. While the number of military violations has increased compared to the previous reporting period, most of them were of a minor nature with respect to maintaining the status quo. I hope that the opposing forces, which have demonstrated overall good cooperation with UNFICYP, will respond positively to the ongoing efforts of UNFICYP to advance discussions on military confidence-building measures.

35. Restrictions on the movement of locally employed United Nations civilian personnel, noted in paragraph 25 above, regrettably continue. The freedom of movement for all United Nations personnel is a matter of principle to the Organization and an operational requirement for UNFICYP and I call on the Turkish Cypriot authorities to respect this principle.

36. Both communities have continued to rely on UNFICYP assistance in areas ranging from humanitarian and economic matters to a variety of bicommunal issues

affecting the lives of Cypriots. UNFICYP worked closely with the two communities on solving practical day-to-day issues, particularly in the buffer zone.

37. The civilian and police components of the mission have been instrumental in facilitating the Technical Committees on Cultural Heritage and Crime and Criminal Matters. With regard to the latter, I hope that the imminent relocation of its joint communications room to more suitable premises will promote greater cooperation for the tangible benefit of all Cypriots.

38. UNDP, assisted by UNFICYP, is leading efforts to realize the leaders' agreement to open a seventh crossing in the area of Limnitis/Yeşilırmak. Its swift opening, without further delays, would improve the daily lives of all Cypriots by enhancing freedom of movement throughout the island and would serve to build trust and confidence between the sides. In the same vein, I also hope that the stabilization and restoration of buildings at the Ledra Street/Lokmaçı crossing will advance in a timely manner.

39. Further progress has been achieved on the clearing of minefields in the buffer zone. I note with satisfaction the commitment of the Turkish Forces to release a further 13 minefields for clearance, 4 of which are located north of the buffer zone, which is a welcome widening of the scope of mine clearance beyond the original demining agreement. I hope that the remaining Turkish Forces minefield south of Varosha, and the three National Guard minefields in the Laroujina pocket, will also be released by the respective authorities. I urge both opposing forces to cooperate with the United Nations to realize the goal of a mine-free buffer zone for all Cypriots by April 2011.

40. I am pleased to report that the humanitarian work of the Committee on Missing Persons continues unhindered. I urge all parties concerned to take every possible action to support this work, including by preventing the important work of the Committee from being politicized. I am encouraged by the recent widening of the geographical scope of exhumation to military areas, and strongly hope that this trend will continue in the coming period.

41. I remain of the view that the establishment of economic, social, cultural, sporting or similar ties and contacts will have a positive impact on the ongoing negotiations. Such contacts would nurture a sentiment of trust between the communities and help to ease the sense of isolation felt by the Turkish Cypriots. Further, greater economic and social parity between the sides will make the eventual reunification not only easier but also more likely. In the context of an internationally sanctioned peace process, efforts in the opposite direction can only be counterproductive.

42. It is my firm belief that UNFICYP continues to play an essential role on the island, including in support of my mission of good offices. I recommend, therefore, that the Security Council extend the mandate of UNFICYP for six months, until 15 December 2010.

43. At the same time, mindful of the Security Council's previous calls and my stated intention to keep all peacekeeping operations under review, I shall continually keep the operations of UNFICYP under close review, taking into account developments on the ground and the views of the parties, and shall revert to the Council with recommendations, as appropriate, for further adjustments to the UNFICYP mandate, force levels and concept of operations as soon as warranted.

44. In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Taye-Brook Zerihoun for his dedicated service over the last two years as my Special Representative in Cyprus and Chief of Mission. As deputy Special Adviser he has also facilitated a significant number of meetings of the leaders in the framework of the settlement negotiations and served as the conduit for UNFICYP support to my mission of good offices, consistent with the integrated approach of the United Nations efforts on the ground. I also extend my appreciation to the Force Commander and, as from 1 May 2010, acting Chief of Mission, Rear Admiral Mario César Sánchez Debernardi, and to the men and women serving in UNFICYP for the efficiency and commitment with which they have discharged the responsibilities entrusted to them by the Security Council.

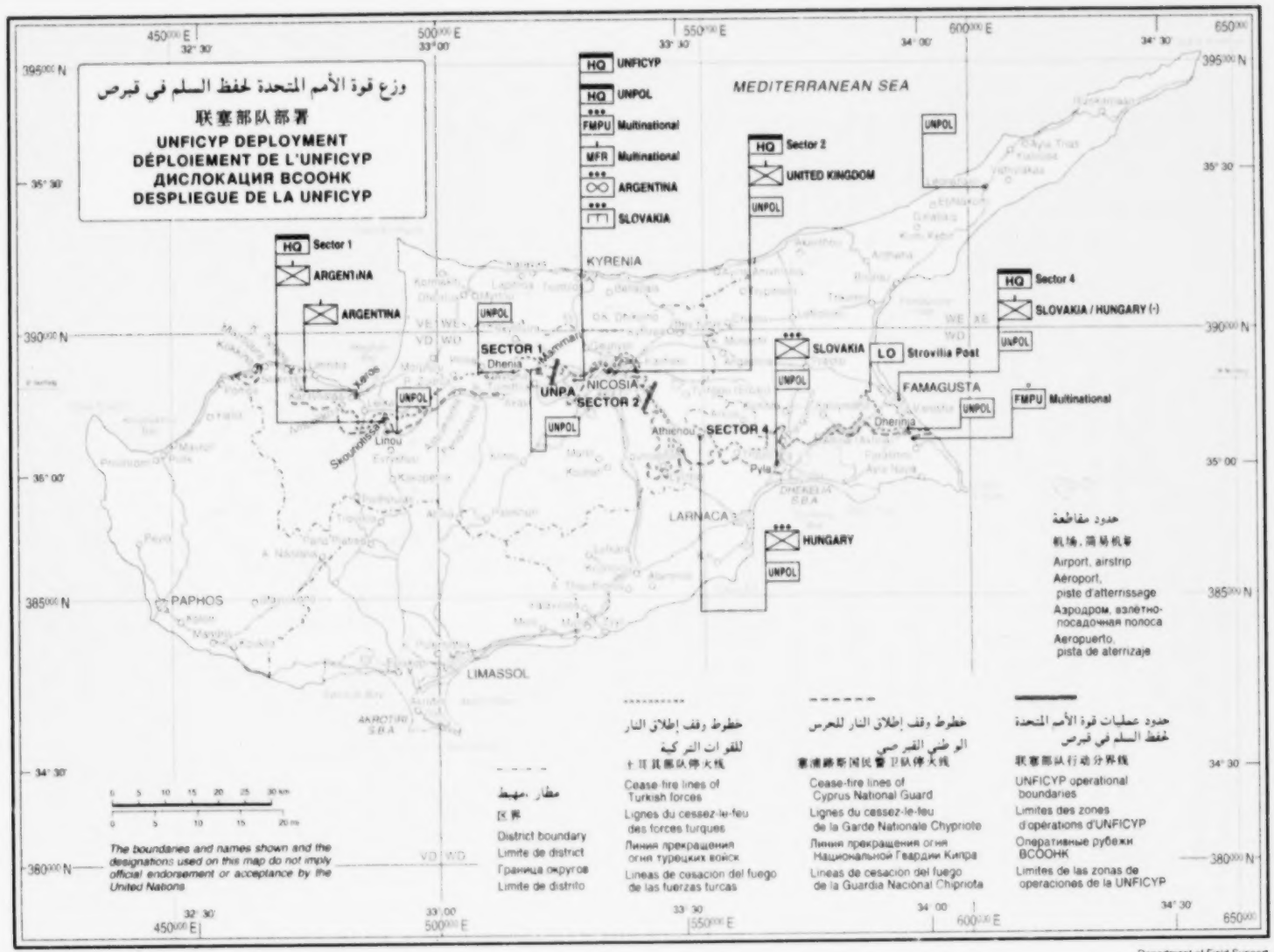
Annex

Countries providing military and civilian police personnel to the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (as at 30 April 2010)

Country	*Military personnel*
Argentina[a]	295
Austria	4
Canada	1
Hungary	84
Peru[b]	2
Slovakia[c]	200
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	273
Total	**859**

	United Nations police
Australia	15
Bosnia and Herzegovina	3
Croatia	4
El Salvador	8
India	7
Ireland	18
Italy	4
Montenegro	1
Netherlands	7
Ukraine	2
Total	**69**

[a] The Argentinean contingent includes soldiers from Chile (15), Paraguay (14) and Brazil (1).
[b] Peru is using one vacant Canadian and one British post at UNFICYP headquarters.
[c] The Slovakian contingent includes soldiers from Croatia (4).



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